

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-08

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R 062333Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6343

INFO USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T LONDON 15988

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, IZ, UK, FR, UR

SUBJECT: FRENCH AND BRITISH PERCEPTIONS OF IRAQ AND  
ARMS POLICY

SUMMARY: ALL SYSTEMS SEEM TO BE "GO" AS BRITISH PERCEIVE  
FRENCH RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAQ. BRITISH ARE MORE GUARDED,  
ESPECIALLY ON POTENTIAL ARMS SALES. END SUMMARY.

1. AN FCO SOURCE CONFIDED TO US DECEMBER 5 THAT FRENCH  
PM CHIRAC HAD GIVEN A BRIEFING TO EC AMBASSADORS AT THE  
END OF HIS RECENT VISIT TO IRAQ. CHIRAC QUOTED IRAQ'S  
SADDAM HUSSEIN TAKRITI AS SAYING THAT IRAQ ABSOLUTELY  
MUST GET OUT FROM UNDER THE SOVIETS. CHIRAC ALSO SAID  
HIS SIX HOURS OF TALK WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN HAD REVEALED A  
"COMPLETE IDENTITY OF VIEWS."

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2. FCO DOES NOT HAVE CONFIRMED REPORTS, BUT SUSPECTS

THERE IS TRUTH IN VARIOUS NEWSPAPER STORIES ALLEGING THAT FRANCE HAS BORROWED ONE BILLION DOLLARS FROM IRAQ AND THAT FRENCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WAS DISCUSSED FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF IRAQI DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. BRITISH HAVE NO INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE ARMS DEALS, THOUGH THEY NOTE ALOUETTE HELICOPTERS ARE IN IRAQ AND THERE IS NO REASON TO EXCLUDE MORE ARMS SALES.

3. BRITISH HAVE SIMILAR PERCEPTION OF--BUT DIFFERENT REACTION TO--IRAQI POLICY. THEY TOO HAVE BEEN GIVEN INDICATIONS THAT IRAQ IS SEEKING TO REDUCE ITS DEPENDENCE ON SOVIET UNION. (FORMER IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER APPARENTLY TOLD BRITISH THAT IRAQ IS INTERESTED IN "EFFICIENCY, SPEED, AND COST IN THAT ORDER," IMPLYING THAT RELATIONSHIP TO SOVIETS IS NOT COMPLETELY SATISFACTORY. ADDITIONALLY THERE IS SOVIET CAUTION IN PROVIDING HELP FOR KURDISH WAR, WHICH IS RESENTED BY IRAQIS.) BUT BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH IRAQ ARE STILL MOSTLY BAD, AND, ON THEIR PART, BRITISH HAVE TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO OFFEND IRAN.

4. FCO IRAQI DESK OFFICER SHOWED ONLY GENERAL AWARENESS OF IRAQI PROBES WITH BRITISH COMPANIES FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT (OF WHICH EMBASSY HAS MORE SPECIFIC EVIDENCE, REPORTED SEPARATELY). HE CONFIRMED, HOWEVER, THAT ANY MAJOR ARMS SALE TO IRAQ, IN MANNER RECENTLY CONCLUDED WITH OTHER ME COUNTRIES, WOULD BE INCONCEIVABLE. BRITISH ARE VERY SENSITIVE TO ATTITUDES OF A MAJOR CUSTOMER SUCH AS IRAN, AS WELL AS MORE GENERALLY TO ATTITUDES OF SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT. THERE IS ALSO BRITISH DOMESTIC OPINION (AND ISRAELI OVERTONES) TO BE CONSIDERED. WHILE THIS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY RULE OUT NONLETHAL ITEMS (EVEN PERHAPS INCLUDING TRANSPORT HELICOPTERS) ANY ARMS REQUESTS FOR IRAQ WOULD BE VERY CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZED BY HMG.

SPIERS

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